

STATE OF MAINE
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 2002-357

July 23, 2002

Appeal of Consumer Assistance Division
Decision #2002-12746 Regarding
Central Maine Power Company

ORDER

WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT and DIAMOND, Commissioners

I. SUMMARY

In this Order, we uphold the June 6, 2002 decision of our Consumer Assistance Division's (CAD's) finding that Central Maine Power Company (CMP) properly billed for electric usage, and investigated and responded to the dispute of Ms. Jeanne Grover.

II. BACKGROUND

On April 30, 2002, Ms. Grover contacted the CAD over a dispute with CMP concerning high usage on her CMP residential account. Ms. Grover stated that she had moved out of her home in October and turned off all major appliances. Her bill for October recorded 1155 kWh usage, November 1688, December 1848, January 156, February 617 and March 866. CMP tested the meter in March and found it to be working within the standards for meter accuracy contained in Chapter 32 of the Commission's Rules. CMP informed the customer that a possible defective ground in the house's internal wiring or some unintended usage such as continued use of an electric space heater could have caused the usage.

On June 6, 2002, the Consumer Assistance Division issued its decision finding that CMP acted reasonably in responding to the complaint. Ms. Grover appealed that decision to the Commission on June 13, 2002.

III. DISCUSSION AND DECISION

The Commission requires that a utility maintain meters within a certain range of accuracy. At the request of a customer, a utility must test a meter. CMP followed these rules and found the meter was operating properly. The test showed the meter read accurately under both full and light load conditions. Absent evidence of a defective meter, a customer is responsible for the cost of electricity once it passes through the meter.

It is possible for electric usage to occur even when a customer believes all appliances have been turned off. For this reason CMP suggested that Ms. Grover consult an electrician, but there is no evidence in the record that this occurred. CMP correctly billed Ms. Grover for the usage that was recorded on the properly operating meter. Customers are ultimately responsible for activities that occur at their residence.

Therefore, we uphold the decision of the CAD and decline to investigate this matter further.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this 23rd day of July, 2002.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

Raymond J. Robichaud
Assistant Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR: Welch
 Nugent
 Diamond

NOTICE OF RIGHTS TO REVIEW OR APPEAL

5 M.R.S.A. § 9061 requires the Public Utilities Commission to give each party to an adjudicatory proceeding written notice of the party's rights to review or appeal of its decision made at the conclusion of the adjudicatory proceeding. The methods of review or appeal of PUC decisions at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding are as follows:

1. Reconsideration of the Commission's Order may be requested under Section 1004 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (65-407 C.M.R.110) within 20 days of the date of the Order by filing a petition with the Commission stating the grounds upon which reconsideration is sought.
2. Appeal of a final decision of the Commission may be taken to the Law Court by filing, within **21 days** of the date of the Order, a Notice of Appeal with the Administrative Director of the Commission, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(1)-(4) and the Maine Rules of Appellate Procedure.
3. Additional court review of constitutional issues or issues involving the justness or reasonableness of rates may be had by the filing of an appeal with the Law Court, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(5).

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